
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE CONVENING OF A MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS WORKING
GROUP.

1 WHEREAS, there is a shortage of physicians in the State,
2 with shortages being even more pronounced on the neighbor
3 islands; and

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5 WHEREAS, there appears to be a pronounced shortage of
6 primary care physicians, as well as physicians of all
7 specialties on neighbor islands, including cardiologists,
8 obstetricians and gynecologists, internists, psychiatrists,
9 pediatricians, and neurologists, as well as physician extenders,
10 such as advanced practice registered nurses with prescriptive
11 authority and physician assistants, and allied mental health
12 professionals, such as psychologists, social workers, marriage
13 and family therapists, and other therapists, on the neighbor
14 islands; and

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16 WHEREAS, one proven solution to aid in addressing unmet
17 medical needs on the neighbor islands is telemedicine and, with
18 respect to psychiatric disease, telepsychiatry, which is
19 currently finding increasing success in treating children with
20 psychiatric disease on Hawaii and Maui, and which was supported
21 by Act 159, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014; and

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23 WHEREAS, there has been an increase in the number,
24 complexity, and life-threatening side effects of medications
25 used to treat brain disorders; and

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27 WHEREAS, these side effects, including heart attacks and
28 strokes, are of such concern that the United States Food and
29 Drug Administration ordered "black box warnings" on psychiatric
30 medications; and



1 WHEREAS, these medications, while effective, can have
2 bothersome, hazardous, and potentially lethal side effects
3 involving both the body and the brain; and
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5 WHEREAS, patients with severe psychiatric illnesses die
6 twenty-five years younger than the rest of our community, not by
7 suicide, but due to medical diseases, including diabetes, heart
8 failure from high blood pressure, lung disease from cigarette
9 smoking, stroke, and heart attacks, all of which can be made
10 worse by medications prescribed to alleviate psychiatric
11 disease; and
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13 WHEREAS, the training and practice of psychiatrists has
14 therefore become increasingly focused on dealing with the bodily
15 consequences of psychiatric disease and the medications used to
16 treat them, including such consequences as smoking, diabetes,
17 stroke, heart attacks, and kidney failure, which are
18 increasingly common in patients afflicted with schizophrenia,
19 bipolar I disorder, and severe depression; and
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21 WHEREAS, physician extenders, such as advanced practice
22 registered nurses with prescriptive authority and physician
23 assistants, by virtue of their biology, chemistry, physiology
24 and medical-based training, are qualified to treat patients,
25 under a physician's supervision, with medications for
26 infections, high blood pressure, and diabetes, as well as the
27 more moderate mood and anxiety disorders; and
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29 WHEREAS, many health and brain disorders can be treated by
30 social workers, family therapists, the clergy, and
31 psychologists, using psychotherapy, including techniques like
32 cognitive-behavioral therapy, and faith-based therapies, as well
33 as a spectrum of other therapies; and
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35 WHEREAS, there are numerous non-physician mental health
36 care professionals trained to deliver psychological and
37 spiritual therapies within the scope of their training and
38 expertise, including doctoral level therapists, such as Ph.D.
39 clinical, counseling, and school psychologists and Psy.D.
40 clinical psychologists, as well as Master's degree level
41 therapists, such as Masters of Social Work, marriage and family
42 therapists, and mental health counselors, as well as other
43 mental health counselors, including pastors, rabbis, Buddhist
44 monks and priests, Shinto priests, and Muslim and other



1 spiritual healers, who, through their non-pharmacological
2 expertise, significantly help to heal psychiatric distress; and
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4 WHEREAS, the training of all non-medically trained mental
5 health care professionals, such as ministers and psychologists,
6 have no overlap with the standard training required of medically
7 trained health care professionals, such as advanced practice
8 registered nurses with prescriptive authority and physician
9 assistants; and
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11 WHEREAS, the standard training required of medically
12 trained health care professionals includes medical school
13 prerequisite-level coursework in chemistry, biology,
14 mathematics, microbiology, and other topics; and
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16 WHEREAS, it has been suggested by proponents of legislation
17 proposing to confer prescriptive authority to clinical
18 psychologists that, under certain conditions, clinical
19 psychologists may be qualified to prescribe medications; and
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21 WHEREAS, this view is unjustified by the fact that
22 psychologists are not required to complete the coursework in
23 biology, chemistry, physiology, medicine, and the other sciences
24 required of all other disciplines qualified to prescribe
25 medication, including primary care physicians, psychiatrists,
26 advanced practice registered nurses, advanced practice
27 psychiatric nurses, and appropriately trained and supervised
28 physician assistants; and
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30 WHEREAS, these competing views need to be carefully
31 examined; and
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33 WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the health, safety, and
34 well-being of the State to consider the appropriateness of
35 conferring prescriptive authority to various health care
36 professionals to treat mental illness in Hawaii; now, therefore,
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38 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
39 Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
40 Session of 2015, the Senate concurring, that the Department of
41 Psychiatry of the University of Hawaii at Manoa is requested to
42 convene a Mental Health Access Working Group (Working Group) to
43 develop recommendations:
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- (1) For the establishment of standards for mental health care in the State, with particular attention to the neighbor islands and rural areas;
- (2) To increase access to all mental health providers; and
- (3) Regarding how telemedicine and physician extenders, and the use of allied mental health care professionals, such as spiritual leaders, social workers, marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, might improve access to the appropriate level of treatment by the appropriately designated discipline, be it spiritual healing, psychotherapy, or medication; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature requests that the Working Group be assigned to the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Hawaii at Manoa for administrative purposes and make recommendations and propose legislation to improve access to mental health care; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature requests that the Working Group be composed of:

- (1) The Chairperson of the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, or the Chairperson's designee, who is suggested to serve as the chairperson of the Working Group;
- (2) The Director of Health, or the Director's designee;
- (3) The Director of Human Services, or the Director's designee;
- (4) The Deputy Director of the Corrections Division of the Department of Public Safety, or the Deputy Director's designee;
- (5) A representative of the Insurance Commissioner who is familiar with issues of access to health care;
- (6) The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Health, or the Chairperson's designee;



- (7) The Chairperson of the House Committee on Health, or the Chairperson's designee;
- (8) The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection, or the Chairperson's designee;
- (9) The Chairperson of the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, or the Chairperson's designee;
- (10) The Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and the Arts, or the Chairperson's designee;
- (11) The Chairperson of the House Committee on Higher Education, or the Chairperson's designee;
- (12) The Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, or the Chairperson's designee;
- (13) The Chief Executive Officer of Hawaii Medical Services Association, or the Chief Executive Officer's designee;
- (14) The President of Kaiser Permanente (Hawaii), or the President's designee;
- (15) A psychopharmacology expert, as designated by the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Hawaii at Manoa;
- (16) A psychology expert, as designated by the Department of Psychology of the University of Hawaii at Manoa;
- (17) A psychiatrist working in a community health center, as designated by the Hawaii Primary Care Association;
- (18) A psychiatrist working in a community mental health center, as designated by the Department of Health;
- (19) A psychiatric nurse practitioner, as designated by the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene of the University of Hawaii at Manoa;



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2 (20) A Doctor of Pharmacy, as designated by the Daniel K.
3 Inouye College of Pharmacy at the University of Hawaii
4 at Hilo;
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6 (21) An expert in telepsychiatry, as designated by the
7 Department of Psychiatry of Tripler Army Medical
8 Center;
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10 (22) An expert in forensic psychiatry, as designated by the
11 Hawaii Health Systems Corporation;
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13 (23) A psychiatric physician assistant, as designated by
14 the Hawaii Medical Board;
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16 (24) A naturopathic physician, as designated by the Board
17 of Naturopathic Medicine;
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19 (25) A licensed marriage and family therapist, as
20 designated by the Director of Commerce and Consumer
21 Affairs;
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23 (26) A licensed mental health counselor, as designated by
24 the Department of Psychology of the University of
25 Hawaii at Hilo;
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27 (27) A psychiatry resident, as designated by the Department
28 of Psychiatry of the University of Hawaii at Manoa;
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30 (28) A doctoral candidate of the psychology Ph.D. degree
31 program, as designated by the Department of Psychology
32 of the University of Hawaii at Manoa;
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34 (29) A patient with a diagnosis of schizophrenia for a
35 minimum of five years who is currently receiving
36 treatment, including antipsychotic medication, and
37 residing on the island of Oahu, as designated by the
38 Hawaii Health Systems Corporation;
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40 (30) A patient with a diagnosis of bipolar disorder for a
41 minimum of five years who is currently receiving
42 treatment, including mood stabilizing medication, such
43 as Lithium, Depakote, or both, and residing on the



1 island of Oahu, as designated by the Hawaii Health
2 Systems Corporation; and
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- 4 (31) A patient with a diagnosis of severe depression for a
5 minimum of five years who is currently receiving
6 treatment, including medication, and residing on the
7 island of Oahu, as designated by the Hawaii Health
8 Systems Corporation; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the issues to be addressed by
11 the Working Group include:
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- 13 (1) An inventory of the mental health professional
14 workforce available in the State;
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16 (2) The distribution of that workforce, with particular
17 attention to the neighbor islands and rural areas of
18 Hawaii; and
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20 (3) The means by which access to mental health care by
21 those professionals, including physicians, such as
22 primary care physicians and psychiatrists, physician
23 extenders, such as advanced practice nurse
24 practitioners and physician assistants, allied mental
25 health professionals, such as social workers, marriage
26 and family therapists, mental health counselors,
27 psychologists, and spiritual healers, may be improved;
28 and
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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Working Group is requested
31 to submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
32 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
33 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
34 of 2016; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
37 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Commerce
38 and Consumer Affairs, Director of Health, Director of Human
39 Services, Insurance Commissioner, Deputy Director of the
40 Corrections Division of the Department of Public Safety,
41 Chairperson of the Department of Psychology of the University of
42 Hawaii at Manoa, Chairperson of the Department of Psychology of
43 the University of Hawaii at Hilo, Dean of the Daniel K. Inouye
44 College of Pharmacy at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, Dean of



1 the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene of the University of
2 Hawaii at Manoa, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Health,
3 Chairperson of the House Committee on Health, Chairperson of the
4 Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection,
5 Chairperson of the House Committee on Consumer Protection and
6 Commerce, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Higher
7 Education and the Arts, Chairperson of the House Committee on
8 Higher Education, Chairperson of the Board of Naturopathic
9 Medicine, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii
10 Health Systems Corporation, Chairperson of the Hawaii Medical
11 Board, Chief Executive Officer of Hawaii Medical Services
12 Association, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii
13 Primary Care Association, President of Kaiser Permanente
14 (Hawaii), and Chief of Psychiatry at Tripler Army Medical
15 Center.

